# **Emerald Ash Borer FAQs**

## Q: What is the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and what does it do?

**A:** A beetle came from Asia, EAB was first discovered in 2002 in southeastern Michigan and Windsor, Ontario. It infests and kills North American ash species (*Fraxinus sp.*) including green, white, black and blue ash, and their cultivars.

The larval stage of EAB feeds under the bark of trees, cutting off the flow of water and nutrients. Infested trees gradually die over a 2-4 year period.

## Q: What does EAB look like?

A: EAB adults are dark metallic green in color, with a coppery red or purple abdomen under the wings. The insect is approximately ½ inch long and 1/8 inch wide. Adults may be present from late May to September, or later, but are typically most common in June and July.

Larvae are creamy white in color and are found under the bark, so are not obvious, but their expanding S-shaped galleries (tunnels) may be seen if the bark is removed. Larvae themselves are hard to see.

When adult beetles emerge from the tree, they leave distinctive D-shaped (half-moon shaped) 1/8 inch exit holes in the outer bark of branches and the trunk. Their presence typically goes undetected until trees show symptoms of being infested.

## Q: Where did it come from?

**A:** The native range of the EAB is eastern Russia, northern China, Japan and Korea.

## Q: When was EAB first discovered in North America?

**A:** EAB was first identified in southeast Michigan and Windsor, Ontario in 2002. It likely arrived several years earlier.

## Q: How did it get to North America?

**A:** We don't know exactly, but it most likely traveled in ash wood pallets or packing material or dunnage used for stabilizing cargo in ships.

## Q: Where is it now?

**A:** As of August 2013 EAB has been confirmed in 22 states and 2 Canadian provinces (from Connecticut to Colorado, Tennessee to Minnesota). A Federal quarantine is in place for entire states, or portions of states that have confirmed the presence of this harmful insect.

#### Q: How does EAB spread?

A: EAB can fly but adults typically go less than ½ mile from their emergence tree. Most long-distance movement of EAB has been directly traced to ash firewood or ash nursery stock. Other untreated ash wood, wood chips greater than one inch, and ash product movement (logs, lumber, pallets, etc) generally present lesser risks. Wood chips less than one inch or mulch are considered to pose little risk of movement.

## Q: Why should we care? How serious is this?

**A:** EAB infestation is usually fatal to ash trees unless treated. Infested trees will decline from the top down and will be dead in approximately 2 to 4 years, even if the trees were healthy before being attacked by EAB. Ash is a very common street tree in many if not all Colorado communities. It was widely planted to replace native elms lost to Dutch elm disease. In Michigan, the first infested state in the U.S., the greatest economic impact has been on communities faced with removal of thousands of dead ash trees. Many of these dead trees pose significant public safety hazards and liability problems for municipalities.

## Q: What is being done about EAB?

A: There is a national effort to limit the spread and impact of EAB. A national plan, coordinated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), helps guide what federal, state and local officials may do to manage this insect. Infested areas may be quarantined, which means that selected materials such as firewood, ash nursery stock and ash logs may not be moved out of infested areas. Many states are educating the public on the dangers of moving firewood; the primary way EAB and many other invasive pests and diseases of trees are spreading.

## Q: Is there anything I can do now to protect the ash trees in my yard from EAB?

**A:** There are systemic insecticides on the market, but their effectiveness varies greatly and they can be expensive. The decision to treat individual trees is a personal preference, but consumers should educate themselves and use caution when purchasing products that claim to protect trees against EAB. It is not advised to treat your trees unless you live within 5 miles of a site confirmed to be infested. The most important thing you can do is properly care for your tree.

## Q: Is ash still a viable choice when considering what to plant in my yard?

**A:** In general, having a diversity of species in your yard, on your street, or in your community is your best defense against all tree health problems. If ash comprises 10 percent or more of the tree species in your local area, it would be best to choose an alternative.

## Q: What can I do to help?

**A:** Do not move firewood. Purchase or cut firewood from the same general location where you plan to use it. When camping or at a cabin, do not take any leftover firewood home with you. Educate yourself on how to recognize signs and symptoms of EAB. Some excellent sources of online information are listed on our website.